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AUTHOR Thompson, Eugene W.; Shein, Henry
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ABSTRACT

The Middle Years Alternative program (MYA) designed for seventh and eighth graders, stresses such objectives as ungraded classes, informal assessment, personal goal setting, and parent and student participation. This evaluation report examined progress toward achieving MYA objectives, and tests two hypotheses implied in the literature: first, that only minimal differences in achievement exist between students in alternative and traditional classrooms and second, that classroom setting does make a difference in preferred learning style. The evaluation was designed to measure five variables: (1) academic achievement; (2) student attitudes; (3) parent attitudes; (4) teacher/counselor attitudes; and (5) cognitive style. Measures of academic achievement were school attendance records and scores on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and the California Achievement Test (CAT). Researchers, parents, and teachers participated in constructing an opinion survey to measure their attitudes toward MYA. Other tests included the Group Embedded Figures Test, the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale and three scales measuring attitudes toward learning processes, mathematics, and leanguage arts. There were no statistical differences on the academic and cognitive style measures between the 81 MYA students and two control groups: non-MYA students at the same school and a district-wide sample. Opinion survey responses indicated that all groups were generally enthusiastic about the program, but it was concluded that the MYA students did not necessarily have higher self concepts. (CP)

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AN EVALUATION OF THE MIDDLE YEARS ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM 1978

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
An Evaluation of the Middle Years Alternative Program	1
Procedures and Methods	7
Student Performance	13
Student Attitudes	18
Parent Attitudes	30
Teacher-Counselor Attitudes	41
Evaluative Questions	50
Cognitive Styles Measures	71
Conclusions	80
MYA Student/Staff Statements	85
References	90

AN EVALUATION OF THE MIDDLE YEARS ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM, 1977-78

The purpose of this document is to describe the 1977-78 evaluation of the Middle Years Alternative (MYA) program located within Forsythe Intermediate School. The following is an enumeration of the individuals directly involved and consulted during the various phases of this project:

Dr. Lee Hansen, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Dr. Richard Stock, Director of Secondary Education
Mr. Vaughn Filsinger, Principal - Forsythe Intermediate School
Ms. Gail Beaver, Media Specialist
Ms. Anne Rappaport, Parent Representative
Mr. Dieter Roth, Counselor - MYA
Ms. Sharon Donia, Teacher - MYA
Ms. Melanie McCray, Teacher - MYA
Ms. Ellen Sapper, Teacher - MYA
Mr. Steve Weatherbee, Teacher - MYA
Ms. Janet Proctor, Student - MYA
Ms. Lisa Pierson, Student - MYA
Mr. David Scott, Student - MYA

Established by Board of Education action, the Middle Years Alternative (MYA) became operational at the beginning of the 1976-77 academic year. The program is the culmination of an effort begun in 1974 by a variety of community organizations and individuals. Those involved in the MYA have not always agreed regarding curricular, personnel, or other matters, however, they remain steadfastly and enthusiastically committed to the program.

At the time this study was begun, eighty-one seventh and eighth grade students were involved in this program which was designed to bridge the gap between the elementary informal classrooms and the alternative high school. This report will describe the procedures and the consequent results of the 1977-78 MYA evaluation, which focused on those students, and whose design was previously submitted to the Board of Education under the title

"Evaluation Design for the Middle Years Alternative Program." This evaluation was developed following a review of last year's MYA program evaluation titled "An Evaluation of the Middle Years Alternative Program, Ann Arbor Public Schools, May 1977," the "Proposal for Alternative Voluntary Enrollment Program for Grades Seven and Eight," and following consultation with those concerned with the MYA evaluation and their representatives. It is hoped that this document will prove a useful tool for understanding the MYA, and also provide a mechanism for measuring progress as bench marked in previous reports.

PROGRAMMATIC GOALS

As stated in the "Proposal for Alternative Voluntary Enrollment Program for Grades Seven and Eight," "it is the programmatic features that differentiate the proposed alternative intermediate program from the prevailing pattern of instruction in the intermediate schools."

These programmatic goals as indicated are as follows:

1. Instruction in basic skills areas will be organized on an interdisciplinary and non-graded format. The process is informal, individually based, and a product of teacher/pupil planning.
2. Student evaluation will utilize anecdotal records and study contracts based upon teacher/student/parent planning. Student self-evaluation will be emphasized.
3. Student involvement in planning, organization and goal setting will be through a town meeting format. Professional staff will join students in this process.
4. The use of community resources and parental involvement in on-going programs will be encouraged.

5. Learning will be based upon the identification of personal goals and will take place by doing and experiencing both in school and in the community.
6. The encouragement and development of a positive self-concept is to be systematically applied regarding student behavior.
7. Students will be encouraged in the direction of individual responsibility for their own learning and behavior.
8. The development of a group identity avoiding "exclusivity," will be encouraged. The development of shared decision-making will be encouraged, and the development of positive relationships, both within a group and between groups, will be encouraged.

In addition to the assessment of progress in the above-stated goals, alternative programs offer other areas for investigation. One of these areas is the basic reason for the existence of alternative programs. That is, research indicates that students vary according to their preferred styles of learning as determined by various psychological factors. Some individuals tend to function [illegible] learn best in a flexible environment over which they have a degree of control, while others are psychologically oriented toward a situation with more external control. Assessment of the preferred learning styles of students involved in the MYA is a logical investigation, since the Ann Arbor Public Schools have the responsibility for providing the optimum educational opportunities for all students.

The goal as taken from the introduction section of the original MYA proposal reads as follows:

9. Students, and their parents, should have the opportunity of participating effectively in determining the nature of the education setting most appropriate to their educational needs and values.

A NOTE REGARDING TESTING IN ALTERNATIVE SITUATIONS

The rationale for the MYA or any school program is learning; an assessment of learning, especially in alternative programs, is not a simple task. As one reads the literature regarding evaluation, and more specifically of the evaluation of alternative programs, recommendations are repeatedly made against the use of general survey achievement norm-referenced test instruments. The basic rationale for this advice is that the instruments are tested, standardized, and normed upon traditional educational groupings. Thus, alternative programs were not specifically included in the norming sample. Simply stated, alternative programs, and the students enrolled in them, are unique unto themselves and as such are not comparable to other groups via traditional methods.

Consequently, standardized instruments used in this evaluation make few references to national norms. Albeit, where these instruments are included, they refer mainly to the students currently enrolled in the Ann Arbor School System, and are utilized to compare specific groups of students for specifically stated reasons.

DESCRIPTION OF EVALUATION CONTENTS

The Middle Years Alternative student group, as described in detail in the Sample Design section, imposed for this project a non-equivalent-control-group design. That is, the experimental group (MYA) was a pre-existing group that required a control group to be matched to it.

The control group, also described in detail in the Sample Design section, was selected from the non-MYA Forsythe student body. In addition to providing a wider spectrum of comparison, a second control group was selected on a system-wide basis for use in describing the California Achievement Test data.

The MYA (experimental) group was accepted as it was constituted. The Forsythe control group was first stratified according to selected variables (i.e., school, year of graduation, sex, race), then randomly assigned to the different control conditions. The second control group (system-wide) was first stratified according to the same variables as in the Forsythe control group (except for school), then randomly assigned to the appropriate control conditions.

The experimental group was compared to both control groups according to CAT test scores. The experimental (MYA) was then compared to the Forsythe control group according to MEAP scores, school attendance, student attitudes toward three curricular sub-areas, student self-concept, and preferred learning styles. Also, attitudes and opinions regarding their program were measured on an MYA student questionnaire administered to MYA students only.

Being a basic part of the program, the parents of the MYA students were polled relative to a series of basic program and attitudinal questions. Moreover, the MYA teachers and counselor were also surveyed for their opinions, feelings, and reactions regarding appropriate areas of concern.

Additionally, three MYA students selected by the English teacher were asked to indicate their feelings about the MYA program in a brief essay format. The building principal has also submitted a position statement with regard to the MYA program in his building.

All of the data collected by these measures will be presented, graphically where possible, in the section titled Results. Conclusions, implications, and opinions will then be presented in the final section.

HYPOTHESES

In this study, as in many similar projects, there are basic hypotheses against which the data collected and the conclusions implied are to be tested. That is, the available literature appears to indicate that there are only minimal quantitative differences between the academic achievements of students found in an alternative setting and students in traditional classroom settings. A second hypothesis is that there will be a difference between students of these two forms of classroom organization in terms of preferred styles of learning.

PROCEDURES AND METHODS

Measures

The focus of this evaluation design is upon five main areas:

A. Student performance
B. Student attitudes
C. Parent attitudes
D. Teacher/counselor attitudes
E. Learning styles of students

The aforementioned programmatic goals are to act as a conceptual guide with regard to the evaluation design. Initially, we have attempted to determine how closely the reality of the MYA program approximates these stated goals. The measures that we utilized as indicators are:

A. Student academic performance
    1. 1983 high school graduates (seventh grade)
        a. The students' 1977 Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) scores
        b. School attendance records
    2. 1982 high school graduates (eighth grade)
        a. The students' 1977 California Achievement Test (CAT) scores
        b. School attendance records
B. Student attitudes
    1. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (The Way I Feel About Myself), 1969*
    2. Researcher/parent-constructed opinion survey
C. Parent attitudes
    1. Parent/researcher-constructed parent survey
D. Teacher/counselor attitudes
    1. Researcher-constructed teacher/counselor survey

E. Cognitive styles measures (student learning styles)

1. Arlin and Hills, "Attitude Toward Learning Processes," 1975
2. Arlin and Hills, "Attitude Toward Mathematics," 1975
3. Arlin and Hills, "Attitude Toward Language Arts," 1975
4. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (The Way I Feel About Myself), 1969*
5. The Group-Embedded Figures Test, 1971

*This instrument will be administered to the MYA group and to the control groups once. The resulting data will be utilized and interfaced in multi-purposed appropriate applications.

CONTROL GROUP

In conducting an evaluation, it is useful to study not only the group whose performance/achievements are of primary interest, but also a similar group of students who are treated differentially along a prescribed set of dimensions. This second group will be known as the "control or comparison" group.

The introduction of the control group will enable the researcher to more precisely ascertain the evaluative criteria as measured against a situation in which the prescribed set of dimensions is the difference.

A description of the sample of students to be used as control groups will be found in the Sample Design section of this document. In that same section will be found an explanation of group construction features.

The specific measurement instruments to be administered to the matched control group (and to the MYA group) are:

1. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (The Way I Feel About Myself), 1969
2. Arlin and Hills, "Attitude Toward Learning Processes," 1975
3. Arlin and Hills, "Attitude Toward Mathematics," 1975

4. Arlin and Hills, "Attitude Toward Language Arts," 1975

5. The Group-Embedded Figures Test, 1971

The random control group will be used for comparative purposes only with regard to the California Achievement Test-70 data.

SAMPLE DESIGN

Population Parameters

In stratified sampling, the researcher attempts to maintain the same proportionality on stratification variables in the sample as occur within the population.

Two groups:

1. MYA students
   - A. 42 males
   - B. 40 females

   82 total

2. Non-MYA Forsythe students
   - A. 42 males
   - B. 40 females

   82 total

The entire population of the MYA student body has been included in the project. Therefore, the sampling design used was a stratified random sample. Consequently, students selected for membership in the comparison groups qualified according to pre-specified variables (listed below). Those students who further qualified for participation at this level were randomly assigned to appropriate control groups.

Stratification Variables

1. All non-MYA students in the population currently attending Forsythe

Intermediate School (for matched control group only)

2. Year of graduation (high school)
3. Sex
4. Race

Group Assignment Procedure

MYA students:

All students were included for evaluation and testing/interview procedures. They were randomly assigned to appropriate grouping classifications according to the second and third stratification variables.

TABLE 1

MYA (EXPERIMENTAL) GROUP

		SEX	
		MALE	FEMALE
Y.O.G.*	1983	23	19
	1982	19	21

*year of graduation

Non-MYA students:

The control groups were selected according to the five variables listed in the section labeled Stratification Variables. Those students who further qualified for participation at this level were randomly assigned to appropriate control groups.

TABLE 2

MATCHED CONTROL GROUP

		SEX	
		MALE	FEMALE
Y.O.G.	1983	23	19
	1982	19	21

TABLE 3

RANDOM CONTROL GROUP

		SEX	
		MALE	FEMALE
Y.O.G.	1982	18	19

It should be noted that there is variation between the number of students selected for each cell above and the actual number of students fully participating in their share of this project. Understandably, not all of those invited were able to participate.

SAMPLE STRATIFICATION - FORSYTHE STUDENTS

TABLE 4

GROUP ASSIGNMENT

39 Females

	1982				1983			
	MYA		Not MYA		MYA		Not MYA	
	Race Code	Pop.	Pop.	Sample	Race Code	Pop.	Pop.	Sample
	#2 =	17	91	17	#2 =	16	70	16
	#4 =	4	20	4	#4 =	2	15	2
GROUP TOTAL		21		21		18		18

TABLE 5

GROUP ASSIGNMENT

42 Males

	1982				1983			
	MYA		Not MYA		MYA		Not MYA	
	Race Code	Pop.	Pop.	Sample	Race Code	Pop.	Pop.	Sample
	#2 =	19	71	19	#1 =	1	1	1
					#2 =	14	85	15
					#3 =	1	0	0
					#4 =	6	28	7
					#9 =	1	0	0
GROUP TOTAL		19		19		23		23

TOTAL MYA = 81
TOTAL NON-MYA MATCHED CONTROL GROUP = 81
TOTAL NON-MYA RANDOM CONTROL GROUP = 37

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

TABLE 6

SEVENTH GRADE MEAP MATH OBJECTIVES ATTAINED BY MYA AND MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS

	MYA	MATCHED CONTROL GROUP	df[4]	F[5]	Probability
N:[1]	37	38	74	2.13	.15
M:[2]	32.5	28.2			
SD:[3]	12.1	13.3			

[1]Number of students

[2]Mean

[3]Standard deviation

[4]Degrees of freedom

[5]F statistic

The data presented in Table 6 indicate that there is no difference in the number of seventh grade Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) math objectives attained by the MYA students and the Forsythe matched-control group. The probability of this difference in group means is only .15. A difference of this magnitude could occur by chance fifteen times out of one hundred. This level of occurrence indicates that there is no statistical difference in terms of the mean scores of the two groups.

TABLE 7

SEVENTH GRADE MEAP READING OBJECTIVES ATTAINED BY MYA AND MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS

	MYA	MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP	df	F	Probability
N:	38	37	74	3.36	.07
M:	17.4	15.2			
SD:	4.6	5.9			

In the area of reading objectives as measured by the MEAP, the data in Table 7 show no statistically significant difference between the MYA and control groups. However, the probability level of .07 leads to the conclusion that a strong trend is present which would indicate that MYA students tend to achieve more reading objectives than those in the control group.

TABLE 8

EIGHTH GRADE CAT READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT BY MYA AND MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS

	MYA	MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP	df	F	Probability
N:	38	38	75	1.18	.28
M:	26.7	29.0			
SD:	9.2	9.1			

Table 8 presents the data collected at the eighth grade level with the California Achievement Test (CAT). Means reported are raw scores. There is no difference between MYA and control groups in the area of reading comprehension.

TABLE 9

EIGHTH GRADE CAT MATH COMPUTATION ACHIEVEMENT BY MYA AND MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS

	MYA	MATCHED CONTROL GROUP	df	F	Probability
N:	38	36	73	8.05	*.006
M:	22.2	28.5			
SD:	9.1	9.8			

Data presented in Table 9 are for math computation as measured by the CAT-70. These data indicate a significant difference between the two groups. MYA students scored significantly lower in this area. The probability level of .006 is in reference to a difference that could occur by chance six times in 1000.

TABLE 10

EIGHTH GRADE CAT READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT BY MYA AND RANDOM CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS

	MYA	RANDOM CONTROL GROUP	df	F	Probability
N:	38	37	74	.987	.32
M:	26.7	28.8			
SD:	9.2	9.08			

CAT reading comprehension data are presented in Table 10. These data compare raw scores for the MYA eighth graders and a 2.5 percent random sample selected from all eighth graders enrolled in the Ann Arbor schools. According to this analysis there is no difference in the reading comprehension levels of the two groups.

TABLE 11

EIGHTH GRADE CAT MATH COMPUTATION ACHIEVEMENT BY MYA AND RANDOM CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS

	MYA	RANDOM CONTROL GROUP	df	F	Probability
N:	38	37	74	10.7	*.001
M:	22.3	29.8			
SD:	9.1	10.7			

Data presented in Table 11 indicate achievement levels in the area of math computation as measured by the CAT. Again, the groups being compared are the MYA and a district-wide random sample of eighth graders. These findings indicate that the MYA students scored significantly lower than other Ann Arbor students in math computation.

TABLE 12

SEVENTH GRADE ATTENDANCE BY HALF-DAYS ABSENT OF MYA AND MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS

	MYA	MATCHED CONTROL GROUP	df	F	Probability
N:	40	41	80	.995	.32
M:	9.5	12.3			
SD:	9.4	15.0			

Attendance data for seventh graders are reported in Table 12. These data are expressed in terms of half-days absent during the first semester of the 1977-78 school year. There is no difference in the attendance record of the two groups of students.

TABLE 13

EIGHTH GRADE ATTENDANCE BY HALF-DAYS ABSENT OF MYA AND MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS

	MYA	MATCHED CONTROL GROUP	df	F	Probability
N:	41	40	80	.260	.61
M:	9.3	8.5			
SD:	6.9	7.8			

Table 13 reports data for eighth grade attendance. No difference was reported for the average attendance record for the two groups.

STUDENT ATTITUDES

TABLE 14

RESULTS OF THE PIERS-HARRIS
CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPT SCALE*

	MYA	MATCHED CONTROL GROUP	df	F	Probability
N:	65	64	128	1.04	.31
M:	59.1	57.2			
PERCENTILE RANKING:	66th	60th			
SD:	10.2	11.8			

*The higher the score, the more positive the student's self-concept. Range: 1-80.

This instrument is designed to measure children's self-concepts; "The Way I Feel About Myself." Here we are comparing the mean scores of the MYA students to the For[illegible] (non-MYA) matched-control group. There were no significant diffe[illegible] ing sex as a variable, consequently the results will not [illegible] to sex. The data presented in Table 14 indic[illegible] ificant difference between the mean scores of the tw[illegible] is no significant difference between the self-concepts of the two groups.

RESULTS OF THE MYA STUDENT OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

58 (72%) students completed this instrument.

1. The following list describes the responsibilities of the MYA parents for the operation of the program.

Percent of Responses					Statements	Responses
A	B	C	D	E		
55	29	3	7	5	1. I feel that my parents are helping me determine my personal learning goals.	A. Doing very well in carrying out this responsibility. B. Making progress toward carrying out this responsibility. C. Making only limited progress toward carrying out this responsibility. D. Making no progress toward carrying out this responsibility. E. I do not feel that this item is an important part of my education in MYA.
A	B	C	D	E		
43	21	11	20	5	2. I feel that my parents are becoming familiar with course offerings and helping me choose classes.	
A	B	C	D	E		
22	26	17	21	14	3. I feel that my parents are contributing to the program by participating in activities and committees.	
A	B	C	D	E		
25	24	24	17	10	4. I feel that my parents are participating in decisions about program activities.	
A	B	C	D	E		
49	21	14	11	5	5. I feel that my parents are being supportive of the teachers' efforts to provide for a wide range of students' needs, interests, and learning styles.	

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
32	20	7	32	9	6. I feel that my parents are assisting when possible in the daily operation of the program by teaching mini-classes, tutoring, or providing field trip transportation.

2. The following list describes the responsibilities of the MYA teachers for the operation of the program.

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
80	15	3	2	0	1. I feel that the MYA teachers are becoming well acquainted with each student.
A	B	C	D	E	
67	17	10	7	0	2. I feel that the MYA teachers are being available to students and parents who wish to talk to them.
A	B	C	D	E	
39	32	15	12	2	3. I feel that the MYA teachers are meeting with parents and students to set individual learning goals.

Responses

A. Doing very well in carrying out this responsibility.

B. Making progress toward carrying out this responsibility.

C. Making only limited progress toward carrying out this responsibility.

D. Making no progress toward carrying out this responsibility.

E. I do not feel that this item is an important part of my education in MYA.

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
27	42	22	7	3	4. I feel that the MYA teachers are facilitating parent and student involvement in program planning.
A	B	C	D	E	
68	17	5	7	3	5. I feel that the MYA teachers are providing a comfortable learning environment.
A	B	C	D	E	
60	17	12	12	0	6. I feel that the MYA teachers are encouraging and respecting students' expressions of ideas and feelings.
A	B	C	D	E	
73	17	3	3	3	7. I feel that the MYA teachers are providing a variety of courses to meet a wide range of student needs, interests, and learning styles.
A	B	C	D	E	
39	29	15	5	12	8. I feel that the MYA teachers are extending the learning environment into the community.
A	B	C	D	E	
49	23	12	11	5	9. I feel that the MYA teachers are informing parents about students' problems.
A	B	C	D	E	
52	22	19	3	3	10. I feel that the MYA teachers are assessing student progress in terms of individual growth.

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
63	13	12	8	3	11. I feel that the MYA teachers are informing parents about students' progress.

3. The following list describes the responsibilities of the MYA students for the operation of the program.

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
45	40	5	8	2	1. I feel that I try to help other students when I can.
A	B	C	D	E	
57	32	10	0	2	2. I feel that I am determining my personal learning goals.
A	B	C	D	E	
26	33	22	12	7	3. I feel that I am participating with teachers in planning classes.
A	B	C	D	E	
75	13	5	5	2	4. I feel that I am choosing classes which meet my needs.
A	B	C	D	E	
52	33	10	3	2	5. I feel that I am committed to participating in classes I have chosen.
A	B	C	D	E	
51	39	7	3	0	6. I feel that I am behaving in learning situations so that I do not interfere with the opportunities of all to learn.

Responses

A. Doing very well in carrying out this responsibility.

B. Making progress toward carrying out this responsibility.

C. Making only limited progress toward carrying out this responsibility.

D. Making no progress toward carrying out this responsibility.

E. I do not feel that this item is an important part of my education in MYA.

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
42	40	12	5	2	7. I feel that I am participating in planning and carrying out program activities.

4. The following is a list of program goals which were developed by the MYA teachers. The percentages listed demonstrate the order of importance that they were placed in by the MYA students.

Percent of Responses										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
0	23	7	17	13	10	13	7	0	10	Individualization
3	20	7	13	10	10	13	3	17	3	Development of positive self-concept by students
10	10	13	20	7	7	3	3	3	23	Small class size
0	17	24	28	7	7	14	3	0	0	Courses based on needs, learning styles, and interests of students
0	3	7	10	21	7	10	10	21	10	Student-parent-teacher goal setting and evaluation
0	10	10	13	20	17	7	10	3	10	Open-ended learning experiences
20	10	3	13	10	7	13	10	0	13	Individual student responsibility for learning and behavior
7	7	10	3	0	10	7	28	17	10	Teacher-parent contact at regular intervals; conferences when problems arise; encouragement of parent-initiated conferences
0	0	0	0	7	4	29	25	14	24	Community involvement in the total learning environment; extensive use of community resources and parents
17	10	3	7	7	14	10	10	10	10	Development of group identity; shared decision making; responsibility for students assisting each other's learning; development of positive relationships within a group

5. Compared to your previous school, how well is the MYA program meeting your educational needs?

Better	The same	Not as well
57%	17%	26%

6. How well do you like school in general?

62% I like school a lot.

18% School is okay.

11% Sometimes I like school.

6% I like school a little.

4% I don't like school at all.

7. Are subjects in MYA classes taught according to grade level?

Yes	No
31%	69%

8. Are your classes organized so that you cover more than one subject area in a particular class?

Yes	No
86%	14%

9. Is the teaching process:

A. Informal?	Yes: 78%	No: 22%
B. Individualized?	Yes: 92%	No: 8%
C. The product of teacher/ pupil planning?	Yes: 73%	No: 27%

10. Have you attended an informal alternative classroom or program before?

Yes	No
55%	45%

If YES, in which grade(s)?

K-1: 2%
1-3: 12%
3-6: 35%
7: 21%

11. Are you happy and enthusiastic about the MYA program?

Yes	Usually, Somewhat	No
72%	18%	10%

12. What grade are you in this year?

    7th: 53%

    8th: 47%

13. Most of my friends:

    54% Are in the MYA
    15% Are not in the MYA, but at Forsythe
    10% Attend their neighborhood intermediate school
    17% All of the above
     4% None of the above

14. For this question, mark the phrases that you think are most probably true of the relations between members of the MYA student community and the general Forsythe student community.

    40% Avoid each other
    35% Treat each other fairly
    38% Like each other
    19% Learn from each other
    41% Dislike each other
    17% Fight each other
    43% Try to put each other down
    35% Tolerate each other
    10% Try to understand each other's problems
    12% Ignore any differences that may exist
    40% Are suspicious of each other
    28% Treat each other as individuals rather than as members of groups

15. In how many of the non-MYA activities at Forsythe do you feel that you would be accepted?

    22% All
    30% Most
    22% About half
    16% Few
    10% None

16. How many of the things that you should be learning right now are being taught in your school?

31% All
41% Most
12% About half
12% Few
4% None

17. What is your main reason for choosing the MYA program?

36% A. Didn't like, had problems with, didn't want to go to neighborhood intermediate school
2% B. You are advanced in a subject and could not pursue it at your neighborhood intermediate school.
30% C. It sounded good, interesting, nice.
14% D. It is an alternative; I prefer alternatives.
6% E. It is open; I like open classrooms.
2% F. Recommended by friend, parent, teacher
2% G. Parents said I had to; no choice.
8% H. Attracted to a particular feature of MYA (e.g., enrichment, individualization, non-authoritarian approach, smaller class size, etc.)
0% I. To further my own growth; chance for greater growth.

18. Within the MYA, how many activities which you participate in have students involved in planning the activity?

18% All
43% Many
31% About half
4% Few
4% None

19. How would you rate "group spirit" among the students of the MYA community?

29% Excellent
39% Good
26% Adequate
4% Poor
2% Very poor

20. Do students in the MYA evaluate themselves and report those results to the teacher?

Yes	No
59%	41%

21. Do you use study contracts?

Yes	No
55%	45%

22. Are teacher observations of the student used in evaluation?

Yes	No
80%	20%

23. Does the MYA hold "town meetings" in order to involve students in planning, goal-setting, and organizational activities?

Yes	No
33%	67%

24. Does learning in the MYA take place by doing and experiencing in...

A. the school? Yes: 94% No: 6%

B. the community? Yes: 79% No: 21%

Open-ended Response Items

25. Student comments: Question 1

Frequency	
2	Parents should come to class more.
1	Parents communicate well with students.
2	Parents should encourage better academic performance by students.
9	Parents should become more aware of student progress.
3	Parents should be more help to students with their personal problems.
3	Parents should have more conferences with teachers.
3	Parents should be more supportive of students and the MYA program at home.
1	Parents should become better acquainted with MYA curriculum.
1	Parents should become better aware of the students' school attendance patterns.

Open-ended Response Items

26. Student comments: Question 2

Frequency	
1	Teachers are competent.
1	They teach well.
1	Teachers motivate students.
1	Teachers should offer more curricular choices during each class period.
3	Teachers should offer more counseling to students regarding life problems.
1	Teachers should provide more supplies.
7	Teachers should make students behave better during class.
2	Better teacher assessment of student workload capabilities
3	Teachers should increase communications with parents.

Open-ended Response Items

27. Student comments: Question 3

Frequency	
1	Student feels she/he is learning a lot.
2	Too many students who are avoiding school work
5	Students should be more respectful of others.
3	Students should come to class prepared with writing equipment, etc.
1	Students should voice their opinions about the MYA more frequently.
3	Students should be more responsible for their own behavior and be less abusive of the MYA program.

Open-ended Response Items

28. Student comments: Question 4

Frequency	
1	Recruit more students

29. What one or two things do you like most about the MYA program?

Frequency	
1	The open-mindedness
12	The people involved
2	Being encouraged and able to talk with teachers
4	It offers a superior program.
18	Working at individual rates
9	Students select classes
9	Individual freedom
10	Individualization
2	A chance to be heard
3	Open classrooms
1	Small class size
2	Great variety of classes
1	Learning by experiencing

30. Are there things in the MYA program that you think need to be changed?

Frequency	
7	Needs more discipline
1	Higher rates of learning are needed.
1	Students should become more involved in planning classes.
2	Program needs higher level of organization
	Better transportation
1	Better communication between teachers and parents
1	Students need to be more respectful of others.
1	Higher expectations of students
3	Stricter screening process for program applicants
3	Better attendance by students

31. How did you learn about the MYA program?

Frequency	
15	My friends
1	A visit to Forsythe
7	Mailed announcement
2	From elementary school (teacher-staff-administrator)
1	My parent's friend
6	Recruiter
14	My family

PARENT ATTITUDES

RESULTS OF THE MYA PARENT OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

29 (36%) families completed this instrument.

1. The following list describes the responsibilities of the MYA parents for the operation of the program.

Percent of Responses					Statements	Responses
A	B	C	D	E		
33	52	15	0	0	1. I feel that I am helping my son/daughter determine their personal learning goals.	A. Doing very well in carrying out this responsibility. B. Making progress toward carrying out this responsibility. C. Making only limited progress toward carrying out this responsibility. D. Making no progress toward carrying out this responsibility. E. I do not feel that this item is an important part of education in the MYA.
A	B	C	D	E		
22	52	22	4	0	2. I feel that I am becoming familiar with course offerings and helping my son/daughter choose classes.	
A	B	C	D	E		
15	11	48	22	4	3. I feel that I am contributing to the program by participating in activities and committees.	
A	B	C	D	E		
4	7	48	33	7	4. I feel that I am participating in decisions about program activities.	
A	B	C	D	E		
36	36	25	4	0	5. I feel that I am being supportive of the teachers' efforts to provide a wide range of students' needs, interests, and learning styles.	

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
18	10	32	36	4	6. I feel that I assist when possible in the daily operation of the program by teaching mini-classes, tutoring, or providing field trip transportation.

2. The following list describes the responsibilities of the MYA teachers for the operation of the program.

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
55	45	0	0	0	1. I feel that the MYA teachers are becoming well acquainted with each student.
A	B	C	D	E	
72	24	4	0	0	2. I feel that the MYA teachers are available to students and parents who wish to talk to them.
A	B	C	D	E	
22	30	44	0	4	3. I feel that the MYA teachers are meeting with parents and students to set individual learning goals.
A	B	C	D	E	
14	43	39	4	0	4. I feel that the MYA teachers are facilitating parent and student involvement in program planning.

Responses

A. Doing very well in carrying out this responsibility.

B. Making progress toward carrying out this responsibility.

C. Making only limited progress toward carrying out this responsibility.

D. Making no progress toward carrying out this responsibility.

E. I do not feel that this item is an important part of education in the MYA.

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
45	41	14	0	0	5. I feel that the MYA teachers are providing a comfortable learning environment.
A	B	C	D	E	
52	41	7	0	0	6. I feel that the MYA teachers are encouraging and respecting students' expressions of ideas and feelings.
A	B	C	D	E	
54	43	4	0	0	7. I feel that the MYA teachers are providing a variety of courses to meet a wide range of student needs, interests, and learning styles.
A	B	C	D	E	
7	39	46	4	4	8. I feel that the MYA teachers are extending the learning environment into the community.
A	B	C	D	E	
41	31	24	0	4	9. I feel that the MYA teachers are informing parents about students' problems.
A	B	C	D	E	
45	41	14	0	0	10. I feel that the MYA teachers are assessing student progress in terms of individual growth.
A	B	C	D	E	
41	45	14	0	0	11. I feel that the MYA teachers are informing parents about students' progress.

3. The following list describes the responsibilities of the MYA students for the operation of the program.

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
19	55	26	0	0	1. I feel that MYA students are caring and supportive of other students.
A	B	C	D	E	
26	37	37	0	0	2. I feel that MYA students determine their personal learning goals.
A	B	C	D	E	
27	42	23	8	0	3. I feel that MYA students participate with teachers in planning classes.
A	B	C	D	E	
36	32	32	0	0	4. I feel that MYA students choose classes which meet their individual needs.
A	B	C	D	E	
18	52	30	0	0	5. I feel that MYA students are committed to participating in classes they have chosen.
A	B	C	D	E	
14	39	43	4	0	6. I feel that MYA students behave in learning situations so that they do not interfere with the opportunities of all to learn.

Responses

A. Doing very well in carrying out this responsibility.

B. Making progress toward carrying out this responsibility.

C. Making only limited progress toward carrying out this responsibility.

D. Making no progress toward carrying out this responsibility.

E. I do not feel that this item is an important part of education in the MYA.

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
22	52	26	0	0	7. I feel that MYA students participate in planning and carrying out program activities.

4. The following is a list of program goals developed by the MYA teachers. The percentages listed demonstrate the order of importance that they were placed in by the MYA parents.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
0	15	22	0	26	7	4	11	11	4	Individualization
48	7	11	11	11	0	4	4	0	4	Development of positive self-concept by students
0	7	4	4	7	19	11	15	4	30	Small class size
11	22	11	15	15	7	15	0	0	4	Courses based on needs, learning styles, and interests of students
0	8	0	19	15	19	4	8	23	4	Student-parent-teacher goal setting and evaluation
4	4	14	0	7	14	25	4	18	11	Open-ended learning experiences
3	33	11	22	4	4	7	4	4	7	Individual student responsibility for learning and behavior
0	4	4	15	4	15	11	11	26	11	Teacher-parent contact at regular intervals; conferences when problems arise; encouragement of parent-initiated conferences
0	0	0	0	11	15	4	15	19	37	Community involvement in the total learning environment; extensive use of community resources and parents
0	11	11	4	15	4	22	27	4	4	Development of group identity; shared decision making; responsibility for students assisting each other's learning; development of positive relationships within a group

5. Compared to your daughter's or son's previous school, how well is the MYA program meeting their educational needs?

Better	The same	Not as well
58%	31%	12%

6. How well does your son/daughter like school in general?

62% They like school a lot.
21% School is okay.
10% Sometimes they like school.
7% They like school a little.
0% They don't like school at all.

7. Are subjects in MYA classes taught according to grade level?

Yes	No
54%	46%

8. Are your daughter's/son's classes organized so that they cover more than one subject area in a particular class?

Yes	No
83%	17%

9. In the MYA, is the teaching process:

A.	Informal?	Yes: 100%	No: 0%
B.	Individualized?	Yes: 96%	No: 4%
C.	The product of teacher/ pupil planning?	Yes: 73%	No: 27%

10. Has your son/daughter attended an informal alternative classroom or program before?

Yes: 52%

No: 48%

If YES, in which grade(s)?

K-1: 17%
1-3: 24%
3-6: 48%
7: 24%

11. Are you happy and enthusiastic about the MYA program?

Yes	Usually, Somewhat	No
54%	32%	14%

12. Most of your son's/daughter's friends:

75% Are in the MYA
0% Are not in the MYA, but at Forsythe
4% Attend their neighborhood intermediate school
13% All of the above
8% None of the above

13. For this question, mark the phrases that you think are most probably true of the relations between members of the MYA student community and the general Forsythe student community.

35% Avoid each other
31% Treat each other fairly
24% Like each other
21% Learn from each other
21% Dislike each other
21% Fight each other
45% Try to put each other down
55% Tolerate each other
4% Try to understand each other's problems
14% Ignore any differences that may exist
31% Are suspicious of each other
41% Treat each other as individuals rather than as members of groups

14. In how many of the non-MYA activities at Forsythe do you feel that your daughter or son would be accepted?

35% All
31% Most
19% About half
12% Few
4% None

15. How many of the things that your son/daughter should be learning right now are being taught in the MYA and at Forsythe?

11% All
82% Most
4% About half
4% Few
0% None

16. What is your main reason for choosing the MYA program?

14%	A.	Didn't like, had problems with, didn't want my daughter/son to go to neighborhood intermediate school.
0%	B.	Your son/daughter is advanced in a subject and could not pursue it at their neighborhood intermediate school.
7%	C.	It sounded good, interesting, nice.
4%	D.	It is an alternative; I prefer alternatives.
4%	E.	It is open; I like open classrooms.
10%	F.	Recommended by friend, parent, teacher
4%	G.	Son/daughter said they had to attend.
55%	H.	Attracted to a particular feature of MYA (e.g., enrichment, individualization, non-authoritarian approach, smaller class size, etc.).
4%	I.	To further daughter's/son's growth; chance for greater growth.

17. Within the MYA, how many activities which your son/daughter participate in have students involved in planning the activity?

8%	All
44%	Many
24%	About half
24%	Few
0%	None

18. How would you rate "group spirit" among the students of the MYA community?

14%	Excellent
62%	Good
21%	Adequate
4%	Poor
0%	Very poor

19. Do students in the MYA evaluate themselves and report those results to the teacher?

Yes: 70% No: 30%

20. Do the MYA teachers use study contracts?

Yes: 78% No: 22%

21. Are teacher observations of the student used in evaluation?

Yes:	No:
100%	0%

22. Does the MYA hold "town meetings" in order to involve students in planning, goal-setting, and organizational activities?

Yes:	No:
59%	41%

23. Does learning in the MYA take place by doing and experiencing in...

A.	the school?	Yes: 96%	No:	4%
B.	the community?	Yes: 44%	No:	56%

Open-ended Response Items

24. Parents' comments: Question 1

Frequency	
4	Parents should arrange more conferences with the teachers.
4	Parents need to be more immediately involved in the program.
2	A more realistic level of expectations of the MYA program
1	Parents need to become more aware of student's academic progress.
1	Parents should be supportive of the students in the home.

Open-ended Response Items

25. Parents' comments: Question 2

Frequency	
1	Four teachers are required to run the program adequately.
1	Teachers should have more pre-planning time available.
1	Teachers' main responsibility is to teach alternatively, individualize instruction, and involve students in different aspects of a subject.
1	Teachers need to be extremely encouraging to students about their accomplishments.
1	Teachers need to be accepting of all students regardless of achievement levels, sex, etc.
2	Teachers need to increase individual student counseling.

(Question Continued)

Frequency	
2	Teachers need to encourage more communication with parents.
1	Teachers should stress personal discipline on the part of students.
1	Teachers should provide a more structured and disciplined atmosphere.

Open-ended Response Items

26. Parents' comments: Question 3

Frequency	
3	Students should increase participation in program planning.
1	Students need to be to class on time.
1	Students need to go to class prepared with school materials.
1	Students should try and integrate themselves more within Forsythe.

Open-ended Response Items

27. Parents' comments: Question 4

Frequency	
2	Children should feel challenged and enthusiastic about learning at their individual levels.
1	A more thorough recruitment and selection process
2	Development of MYA standards
1	Be accepting of people of different cultures, races, socioeconomic class, and ability

28. What one or two things do you like most about the MYA program?

Frequency	
2	Choosing classes according to individual needs
5	The teacher's knowledge of their students
8	The teachers
3	Limited size of the program
2	Variety of courses
2	Group spirit
5	Student excitement and enthusiasm about school
3	Small class size
6	Individual attention

(Question Continued)

Frequency	
4	Program flexibility
1	Teacher accessibility
2	Student responsibility for learning and experiences
1	The students
1	Parental involvement

29. How did you learn about the MYA program?

Frequency	
7	Friends
2	My children
1	From a teacher
4	PALS
8	Elementary school
2	Mailing
1	Newspaper article

30. Are there things in the MYA program that you think need to be changed?

Frequency	
2	More MYA staff
1	More and better communication
2	Clarify goals
2	Increase student responsibility
5	Better classroom behavior by students
1	More pre-planning
1	More direction from the teachers
4	More support from the Board of Education
4	A more thorough recruitment and selection process

TEACHER-COUNSELOR ATTITUDES

RESULTS OF THE MYA TEACHER OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

4 teachers and 1 counselor (100%) completed this instrument.

1. The following list describes the responsibilities of the MYA parents for the operation of the program.

Percent of Responses					Statements	Responses
A	B	C	D	E		
0	40	60	0	0	1. I feel that parents are helping students determine their personal learning goals.	A. Doing very well in carrying out this responsibility. B. Making progress toward carrying out this responsibility.
A	B	C	D	E		
0	80	20	0	0	2. I feel that parents are becoming familiar with course offerings and helping students choose classes.	C. Making only limited progress toward carrying out this responsibility. D. Making no progress toward carrying out this responsibility. E. I do not feel that this item is an important part of education in the MYA.
A	B	C	D	E		
0	60	20	20	0	3. I feel that parents are contributing to the program by participating in activities and committees.	
A	B	C	D	E		
0	25	50	25	0	4. I feel that parents are participating in decisions about program activities.	
A	B	C	D	E		
40	40	20	0	0	5. I feel that parents are being supportive of the teachers' efforts to provide for a wide range of students' needs, interests, and learning styles.	

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
0	20	80	0	0	6. I feel that parents are assisting when possible in the daily operation of the program by teaching mini-classes, tutoring, or providing field trip transportation.

2. The following list describes the responsibilities of the MYA teachers for the operation of the program.

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
20	40	40	0	0	1. I feel that the MYA teachers are becoming well acquainted with each student.
A	B	C	D	E	
20	40	40	0	0	2. I feel that the MYA teachers are available to students and parents who wish to talk to them.
A	B	C	D	E	
0	60	0	40	0	3. I feel that the MYA teachers are meeting with parents and students to set individual learning goals.
A	B	C	D	E	
0	60	40	0	0	4. I feel that the MYA teachers are facilitating parent and student involvement in program planning.

Responses
A. Doing very well in carrying out this responsibility.
B. Making progress toward carrying out this responsibility.
C. Making only limited progress toward carrying out this responsibility.
D. Making no progress toward carrying out this responsibility.
E. I do not feel that this item is an important part of education in the MYA.

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
80	20	0	0	0	5. I feel that the MYA teachers are providing a comfortable learning environment.
A	B	C	D	E	
80	0	20	0	0	6. I feel that the MYA teachers are encouraging and respecting students' expressions of ideas and feelings.
A	B	C	D	E	
80	20	0	0	0	7. I feel that the MYA teachers are providing a variety of courses to meet a wide range of student needs, interests, and learning styles.
A	B	C	D	E	
20	40	40	0	0	8. I feel that the MYA teachers are extending the learning environment into the community.
A	B	C	D	E	
0	80	0	20	0	9. I feel that the MYA teachers are informing parents about students' problems.
A	B	C	D	E	
60	20	20	0	0	10. I feel that the MYA teachers are assessing student progress in terms of individual growth.
A	B	C	D	E	
60	20	0	20	0	11. I feel that the MYA teachers are informing parents about students' progress.

3. The following list describes the responsibilities of the MYA students for the operation of the program.

Percent of Responses					Statements	Responses
A	B	C	D	E		
20	40	20	0	0	1. I feel that MYA students try to help other students when they can.	A. Doing very well in carrying out this responsibility. B. Making progress toward carrying out this responsibility.
A	B	C	D	E		
0	80	0	0	20	2. I feel that MYA students are determining their personal learning goals.	C. Making only limited progress toward carrying out this responsibility. D. Making no progress toward carrying out this responsibility.
A	B	C	D	E		
20	20	40	20	0	3. I feel that MYA students are participating with teachers in planning classes.	E. I do not feel that this item is an important part of education in the MYA.
A	B	C	D	E		
20	40	20	20	0	4. I feel that MYA students are choosing classes which meet their needs.	
A	B	C	D	E		
0	40	40	20	0	5. I feel that MYA students are committed to participating in classes they have chosen.	
A	B	C	D	E		
0	60	20	20	0	6. I feel that MYA students are behaving in learning situations so that they do not interfere with the opportunities of all to learn.	

Percent of Responses					Statements
A	B	C	D	E	
25	50	25	0	0	7. I feel that MYA students are participating in planning and carrying out program activities.

4. The following is a list of program goals which were developed by the MYA teachers. The percentages listed demonstrate the order of importance that they were placed in by the MYA counselor and teachers.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
0	0	0	80	20	0	0	0	0	0	Individualization
20	40	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	Development of positive self-concept by students
0	0	20	0	0	0	20	40	20	0	Small class size
20	40	0	0	20	20	0	0	0	0	Courses based on needs, learning styles, and interests of students
20	0	0	0	0	20	20	0	0	40	Student-parent-teacher goal setting and evaluation
0	20	0	0	0	40	20	0	20	0	Open-ended learning experiences
20	0	40	0	20	0	20	0	0	0	Individual student responsibility for learning and behavior
0	0	20	20	0	20	0	0	40	0	Teacher-parent contact at regular intervals; conferences when problems arise; encouragement of parent-initiated conferences
0	0	0	0	0	0	20	40	0	40	Community involvement in the total learning environment; extensive use of community resources and parents
20	0	20	0	0	0	0	20	20	20	Development of group identity; shared decision making; responsibility for students assisting each other's learning; development of positive relationships within a group

5. Are subjects in MYA classes taught according to grade level?

Yes: 20% No: 60%

6. Are your classes organized so that you cover more than one subject area in a particular class?

   Yes: 100% No: 0%

7. Is the teaching process:

A. Informal?	Yes: 100%	No: 0%
B. Individualized?	Yes: 80%	No: 0%
C. The product of teacher/ pupil planning?	Yes: 80%	No: 0%

8. Are you happy and enthusiastic about the MYA program?

Yes	Usually, Somewhat	No
40%	20%	40%

9. For this question, mark the phrases that you think are most probably true of the relations between members of the MYA student community and the general Forsythe student community.

40%	Avoid each other
20%	Treat each other fairly
20%	Like each other
20%	Learn from each other
0%	Dislike each other
0%	Fight each other
40%	Try to put each other down
100%	Tolerate each other
40%	Try to understand each other's problems
0%	Ignore any differences that may exist
60%	Are suspicious of each other
40%	Treat each other as individuals rather than as members of groups

10. In how many of the non-MYA activities at Forsythe do you feel MYA students would be accepted?

60% All
40% Most
0% About half
0% Few
0% None

11. Within the MYA, how many activities which you participate in have students involved in planning the activity?

25% All
0% Many
75% About half
0% Few
0% None

12. How would you rate "group spirit" among the students of the MYA community?

60% Excellent
20% Good
20% Adequate
0% Poor
0% Very poor

13. Do students in the MYA evaluate themselves and report those results to the teacher?

Yes: 60% No: 40%

14. Do you use study contracts?

Yes: 25% No: 75%

15. Are teacher observations of the student used in evaluation?

Yes: 100% No: 0%

16. Does the MYA hold "town meetings" in order to involve students in planning, goal-setting, and organizational activities?

Yes: 0% No: 100%

17. Does learning in the MYA take place by doing and experiencing in...

A.	the school?	Yes:	100%	No: 0%
B.	the community?	Yes:	100%	No: 0%

Open-ended Response Items

18. Teacher comments: Question 1

Frequency	
1	Parents should encourage better attendance by students.
2	Parents should become more aware of student's progress.
2	Parents should encourage student's school work.
1	Parents should encourage students to follow through on projects.
1	Parents should be more respectful of teacher feedback concerning student behavior.
1	Parents should demonstrate in their own lives those behaviors and attitudes they want to see in their children.

Open-ended Response Items

19. Teacher comments: Question 2

Frequency	
1	Student recruitment should not be a teacher responsibility.
1	More one-to-one staff-student guidance.
1	Teachers should take major responsibility for course design.

Open-ended Response Items

20. Teacher comments: Question 3

Frequency	
2	Students should be more respectful of others.
3	Students should come to class prepared with materials.
1	Students should follow through more on assignments.

Open-ended Response Items

21. Teacher comments: Question 4

Frequency	
1	Student follow-through
1	A good foundation in basic academics
1	A system for handling internal MYA conflicts fairly
1	A long-range class scheduling structure

22. What one or two things do you like most about the MYA program?

Frequency	
1	The students
1	Positive attitude of people in the program
1	Course offerings
3	The ability to interact with students as people
1	The ability to teach different aspects of the subject matter.
1	A real chance to strike a student's area of interest

23. Are there things in the MYA program that you think need to be changed?

Frequency	
1	Realistic expectations of the MYA by students and parents
1	The scheduling process
1	Classroom distributions
1	More counseling
1	Toughened discipline foundation
2	MYA administrator
1	A more stable program - greater commitment from administration

24. What one or two major concerns do you have about the way the program is now operating?

Frequency	
3	Staff morale
1	Program goals are unclear
1	Not enough counseling
2	Too many students who do not share the MYA concern for learning
1	Scheduling structure is too flexible

EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS

Evaluative Question 1.

Has instruction in the MYA program been organized on an interdisciplinary, non-graded format?

Related Program Goals	Criterion for Success
1	agreement among majority of program participants

Related Questionnaire Items

Are your classes organized so that you cover more than one subject area in a particular class?

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Yes	86%	83%	100%
No	14%	17%	0%

Are subjects in MYA classes taught according to grade level?

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Yes	31%	54%	25%
No	69%	46%	75%

The criterion for success appears to have been met by the high level of agreement between all program participants regarding the inclusion of more than one subject area within the curriculum of a particular class. And, a significant majority of teachers and students are in agreement that classes are not conducted essentially according to grade level. Moreover, except for parental perceptions of teaching subjects according to grade level, evaluative question 1. seems to have responded to the first portion

(instruction organized on an interdisciplinary and non-graded format) of programmatic goal 1. rather affirmatively.

Evaluative Question 2.

Is the instructional process informal, individualized, and the product of teacher-pupil planning?

Related Program Goals	Criterion for Success
1, 2, 5, 7, 9	agreement among majority of program participants

Related Questionnaire Items

Is the teaching process informal, individualized, and the product of teacher-pupil planning?

Informal

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Yes	78%	100%	100%
No	22%	-	-

Individualized

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Yes	92%	96%	80%
No	8%	4%	-

The Product of Teacher-Pupil Planning

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Yes	73%	73%	80%
No	27%	27%	-

I feel that the MYA teachers are providing a comfortable learning environment.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	85%	86%	100%
Negative	15%	14%	-

I feel that the MYA teachers are assessing student progress in terms of individual growth.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	74%	86%	80%
Negative	26%	14%	20%

I feel that MYA students are participating with teachers in planning classes.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	59%	69%	40%
Negative	41%	31%	60%

I feel that MYA students are determining their own personal learning goals.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	88%	63%	80%
Negative	12%	37%	20%

I feel that MYA students are choosing classes which meet their needs.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	88%	68%	60%
Negative	12%	32%	40%

I feel that the MYA teachers are encouraging and respecting students' expressions of ideas and feelings.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	77%	93%	80%
Negative	23%	7%	20%

I feel that the MYA teachers are assessing student progress in terms of individual growth.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	74%	86%	80%
Negative	26%	14%	20%

Do students in the MYA evaluate themselves and report those results to the teacher?

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Yes	59%	70%	60%
No	41%	30%	-

Do students use study contracts?

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Yes	55%	78%	25%
No	45%	22%	-

Are teacher observations of the students used in evaluation?

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Yes	80%	100%	100%
No	20%	-	-

While the large majority of participants feel that teachers are well acquainted with each student; that students' ideas are respected and encouraged; that student progress is assessed individually; and that teachers' observations are used in student evaluations, it does not appear that self-evaluation and the use of study contracts is widespread. The data for evaluative question 2. report that approximately one-half of the students do not use study contracts. Forty percent indicated that they do not evaluate themselves and report these data to their teachers.

Evaluative Question 4.

Have "town-meeting" format sessions been held for the purpose of student involvement in planning, organization, and goal setting?

Related Program Goals	Criterion For Success
3, 7, 8, 9	agreement among majority of program participants

Related Questionnaire Items

I feel that the MYA teachers are meeting with parents and students to set individual learning goals.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	71%	52%	60%
Negative	29%	48%	40%

I feel that the MYA teachers are facilitating parent and student involvement in program planning.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	68%	57%	60%
Negative	32%	43%	40%

I feel that the MYA teachers are extending the learning environment into the community.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	68%	46%	60%
Negative	32%	54%	40%

Within the MYA, how many activities which students participate in have students involved in planning the activity?

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
All	18%	8%	25%
Many	43%	44%	-
About Half	31%	24%	75%
Few	4%	24%	-
None	4%	-	-

Does the MYA hold "town meetings" in order to involve students in planning, goal setting, and organizational activities?

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Yes	33%	59%	-
No	67%	41%	100%

A goal of the MYA program is that students and parents will be involved in the program via a "town-meeting" format. The data reported for evaluative question 4. indicate a high degree of agreement that meetings of this type between MYA teachers, parents, and students are not widespread.

Evaluative Question 5.

Is the use of community resources and parental involvement encouraged?

Related Program Goals	Criterion for Success
4, 5, 9	agreement among majority of program participants

Related Questionnaire Items

I feel that parents are becoming familiar with course offerings and helping students choose classes.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	64%	74%	80%
Negative	36%	26%	20%

I feel that parents are contributing to the program by participating in activities and committees.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	48%	26%	60%
Negative	52%	74%	40%

I feel that parents are participating in decisions about program activities.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	49%	11%	25%
Negative	51%	89%	75%

I feel that parents are assisting when possible in the daily operation of the program by teaching mini-classes, tutoring, or providing field trip transportation.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	52%	28%	20%
Negative	48%	72%	80%

Does learning in the MYA take place by doing and experiencing in the community?

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Yes	79%	44%	100%
No	21%	56%	-

Apparently, parents are not as highly involved in the MYA program as had originally been hoped as stated in the program goals. The data from evaluative question 5. indicate inter-group agreement that other than in the area of developing familiarity with course offerings, parents are not highly involved in a contributory sense.

Evaluative Question 6.

Does learning in the MYA take place by doing and experiencing both in the school and in the community?

Related Program Goals	Criterion for Success
4, 5, 7, 8, 9	agreement among majority of program participants

Related Questionnaire Items

I feel that the MYA teachers are providing a variety of courses to meet a wide range of student needs, interests, and learning styles.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	90%	97%	100%
Negative	10%	3%	-

Does learning in the MYA take place by doing and experiencing in:

the school

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Yes	94%	96%	100%
No	6%	4%	-

the community

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Yes	79%	44%	100%
No	21%	56%	-

A high degree of agreement is reached regarding the degree to which MYA teachers are planning individualized programs by which students learn by doing and experiencing. Data in response to evaluative question 6. report a high positive response by all groups. The program, at least as seen by parents, is not branching into the community. Students and teachers disagree.

Evaluative Question 7.

Are the preferred learning styles of students in the MYA compatible with a non-traditional educational environment?

Related Program Goal	Criterion for Success
6	relative to and based upon appropriate comparative and descriptive data

Related Questionnaire Item

Compared to the student's previous school, how well is the MYA program meeting his/her educational needs?

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Better	57%	58%	not polled on this item
Same	17%	31%	
Not as well	26%	12%	

Results of the Group Embedded Figures Test*

	MYA	Matched Control	df	F	Probability
N:	69	65	133	2.06	.15
M:	11.1	9.8			
SD:	5.0	5.4			

*The higher the score, the more successful the student is in differentiating a figure from a background. Range: 1-18. (For a more detailed discussion of this instrument and related concepts, see the cognitive styles section.)

Results of the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale*

	MYA	Matched Control	df	F	Probability
N:	65	64	128	1.04	.31
M:	59.1 (66th Percentile)	57.2 (60th Percentile)			
SD:	10.2	11.8			

*The higher the score, the more positive the student's self-concept. Range: 1-80.

Results of the Arlin-Hill's Attitude Toward Learning Processes (Secondary)*

	MYA	Matched Control	df	F	Probability
N:	58	64	121	49.17	**.000
M:	44.2	33.2			
SD:	9.1	8.3			

*The higher the score, the more positive the student's attitude toward the learning process. Range: 15-60.

Results of the
Arlin-Hill's Attitude
Toward Mathematics (Secondary)*

	MYA	Matched Control	df	F	Probability
N:	60	64	123	6.36	*.01
M:	43.4	39.5			
SD:	7.9	9.2			

*The higher the score, the more positive the student's attitude toward mathematics. Range: 15-60.

Results of the
Arlin-Hill's Attitude
Toward Language Arts (Secondary)*

	MYA	Matched Control	df	F	Probability
N:	58	64	121	1.07	.30
M:	46.2	44.6			
SD:	9.5	7.9			

*The higher the score, the more positive the student's attitude toward language arts. Range: 15-60.

A majority of the students and parents feel that the MYA is meeting the student's educational needs better than their previous school. Although, it should be noted that 1 of 4 students and 1 of 8 parents responded to this item negatively (i.e., "Not as well"). Moreover, the Group Embedded Figures Test indicates a preference on the part of MYA students for an individual learning style which is related to field independence (see Field Dependence-Independence section). Also, the Arlin-Hill's Attitude Toward Learning Processes and Attitude Toward Mathematics both yielded significant data. That is, MYA students demonstrated a significantly more positive attitude toward learning processes and mathematics. Whereas, no significant difference for the two groups were found by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept scale or the Arlin-Hill's Attitude Toward Language Arts. Based upon the data presented above, it would appear that the preferred learning styles of the MYA

students are compatible with a non-traditional educational environment.

Evaluative Question 8.

Is a positive student self-concept being systematically encouraged and developed?

Related Program Goals	Criterion for Success
6, 3	agreement among majority of program participants

Related Questionnaire Items

I feel that MYA teachers are encouraging and respecting students' expression of ideas and feelings.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	95%	93%	80%
Negative	5%	7%	20%

I feel that MYA students try to help other students when they can.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	85%	74%	60%
Negative	15%	26%	40%

I feel that MYA students are determining their own personal learning goals.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	88%	63%	80%
Negative	12%	37%	20%

I feel that MYA students participate in the planning and carrying out of program activities.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	82%	74%	75%
Negative	18%	26%	25%

Results of the
Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale*

	MYA	Matched Control	df	F	Probability
N:	65	64	128	1.04	.31
M:	59.1 (66th Percentile)	57.2 (60th Percentile)			
SD:	10.2	11.8			

*The higher the score, the more positive the students' self-concepts. Range: 1-80.

The program participants are in high positive agreement regarding teacher respect for student ideas and feelings, which is necessary for a positive self-concept. And, there appears to be positive agreement concerning student participation in planning program activities and determining personal learning goals. While students feel that they actively help each other, 3 out of 4 of the parents and 3 out of 5 of the counselors/teachers agree with them. Also, the data yielded by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale indicate no differences regarding self-concept on the part of either group. In addition, when program participants ranked the program's goals, at least 60% of the teachers and parents and a third of the students rated positive self-concept among their top 3 choices. Thus, the majority of the data collected for this item appears to be supportive of a rather high level of agreement among program participants regarding the systematic encouragement of a positive self-concept on the part of MYA students.

Evaluative Question 9.

Are students being encouraged to be responsible for their own learning and behavior?

Related Program Goals	Criterion for Success
1, 2, 3, 6, 7	agreement among majority of program participants

Related Questionnaire Items

I feel that the MYA teachers are being available to students and parents who wish to talk to them.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	83%	96%	60%
Negative	17%	4%	40%

I feel that MYA students try to help other students when they can.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	85%	74%	60%
Negative	15%	26%	40%

I feel that MYA students are committed to participating in classes they have chosen.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	85%	70%	40%
Negative	15%	30%	60%

I feel that MYA students are behaving in learning situations so that they do not interfere with the opportunities of all to learn.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	90%	53%	60%
Negative	10%	47%	40%

Evaluative question 9. asks whether or not students are being encouraged to be responsible for their own learning and behavior. Generally, the data indicate a reasonable degree of agreement among participants regarding the success of meeting this goal. The teachers primarily appear to evidence concern as to whether or not the goal is being met.

Evaluative Question 10.

Is the development of a group identity being encouraged?

Related Program Goals	Criterion for Success
3, 8	agreement among majority of program participants

Related Questionnaire Items

I feel that the MYA teachers are providing a comfortable learning environment.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	85%	86%	100%
Negative	15%	14%	-

I feel that MYA students try to help other students when they can.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	85%	74%	60%
Negative	15%	26%	40%

I feel that MYA students participate in planning and carrying out program activities.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	82%	74%	75%
Negative	18%	26%	25%

The data reported in response to evaluative question 10. indicate that all participants have positive feelings regarding the degree to which group identity within the MYA is being encouraged. Apparently, this goal is being well met.

Evaluative Question 11.

Is the development of shared decision making being encouraged?

Related Program Goals	Criterion for Success
1, 3, 6, 7, 8	agreement among majority of program participants

Related Questionnaire Items

I feel that MYA parents are participating in decisions about program activities.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	49%	11%	25%
Negative	51%	89%	75%

I feel that MYA teachers are being available to students and parents who wish to talk to them.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	83%	96%	60%
Negative	17%	4%	40%

I feel that MYA teachers are meeting with parents and students to set individual learning goals.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	71%	52%	60%
Negative	29%	48%	40%

Within the MYA, how many activities which students participate in have students involved in planning the activity?

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
All	18%	8%	25%
Many	43%	44%	-
About Half	31%	24%	75%
Few	4%	24%	-
None	4%	-	-

I feel that MYA teachers are facilitating parent and student involvement in program planning.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	68%	57%	60%
Negative	32%	43%	40%

Is shared decision making being encouraged within the MYA? The data generated by the student, parent, and teacher questionnaires indicate that while teachers are available to students and parents who wish to talk to them, these meetings are not taking place to a high degree. Apparently, shared decision making is encouraged, but not necessarily taking place.

Evaluative Question 12.

Is the development of positive individual and group relationships being encouraged.

Related Program Goals	Criterion for Success
1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8	agreement among majority of program participants

Related Questionnaire Items

I feel that MYA teachers are becoming well acquainted with each student.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	95%	100%	100%
Negative	5%	-	-

I feel that MYA students try to help other students when they can.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Positive	85%	74%	60%
Negative	15%	26%	40%

Most of my (i.e., MYA student) friends:

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Are in the MYA	54%	75%	not polled on this item
Are not in the MYA, but at Forsythe	15%	-	
Attend their neighborhood intermediate school	10%	4%	
All of the above	17%	13%	
None of the above	4%	8%	

Please check all of the following phrases which you think are most probably true of the relations between members of the MYA student community and the general Forsythe student community.

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Avoid each other	40%	35%	40%
Treat each other fairly	34%	31%	20%
Like each other	38%	24%	20%
Learn from each other	20%	21%	20%
Dislike each other	42%	21%	-
Fight each other	18%	21%	-
Try to put each other down	44%	45%	40%
Tolerate each other	34%	55%	100%
Try to understand each other's problems	10%	4%	40%
Ignore any differences that may exist	12%	14%	-
Are suspicious of each other	40%	31%	60%
Treat each other as individuals rather than as members of groups	28%	41%	40%

How would you rate "group spirit" among the students of the MYA community?

	Student Response	Parent Response	Teacher Response
Excellent	29%	8%	60%
Good	39%	44%	20%
Adequate	26%	24%	20%
Poor	4%	24%	-
Very Poor	2%	-	-

According to the data reported for evaluative question 12., program participants are in quite high agreement that positive individual and group

relationships are encouraged. At the same time, it does not appear that the MYA students have blended well into the Forsythe School, at least according to their own perception. Group "spirit," too, seems to be a bit weak, at least as perceived by the Office of Research and Evaluation.

COGNITIVE STYLES MEASURES

Field Dependence-Independence as a Variable Mediating Satisfaction with Alternative and Traditional Educational Environments: A Replication[1]

Open classrooms are being incorporated into the public school milieu with increasing popularity (Blitz, 1973). Proponents of alternative education emphasize the importance of creating an atmosphere of warmth, understanding, humaneness, encouragement and trust (Silberman, 1973). Emphasis is placed on the total growth of the child, rather than solely on growth in the intellectual domain. Implicit in the trend toward open education is the assumption that children are obtaining increased psychological as well as intellectual benefits from the open educational environment. However, any empirical comparisons between open and traditional classrooms have indicated that there are some questions regarding differences between the two methods of instruction on variables such as self-concept (Black, 1974; Klaff and Doherty, 1975; Lewis and Adank, 1975; Reudi and West, 1973); school achievement (Black, 1974; Crandall, 1973; Tuckman, Cochran and Travers, 1974; Ward and Barcher, 1975; Wright, 1975); creativity (Lewis and Adank, 1975; Wright, 1975); school-related anxiety (Lewis and Adank, 1975; Wright, 1975) and attitude toward school (Arlin, 1976; Klaff and Doherty, 1975; Kourilsky and Baker, 1975).

Considering the purported advantages of the open classroom, lack of clear-cut differences between open and traditional methods of instruction on psychological and achievement variables is somewhat perplexing. Fried-

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[1]Sue, D. M. Field dependence-independence as a variable mediating satisfaction with open and traditional environments. Unpublished research report, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 1976.

lander (1975) has suggested the possibility that children might be attaining some unmeasurable or unidentified benefits from the open educational environment. However, it is also possible that the absence of definitive support for open education may be due to the failure of the previously cited studies to control for mediating variables. Personality, cognitive and perceptual variables may influence both psychological and intellectual progress in school. In other words, some students may benefit greatly from exposure to an open classroom environment, while others may be more comfortable in a traditional setting.

One area in which educational environment and personality variables may interact is that of cognitive styles. Research in this area has repeatedly indicated the presence of individual differences in perceptual, intellectual, social and interpersonal functioning (Kagan and Kogan, 1970). One of the most thoroughly researched individual difference dimensions is that of psychological differentiation or field dependence-independence (Witkin, Dyk, Faterson, Goodenough and Karp, 1962/1974). A field dependent mode of perception is said to be dominated by the overall organization of the field, whereas field independent perception involves the experiencing of parts of a field as discrete from the organized background.

The concepts and methods derived from work on cognitive styles over the past two and one-half decades are being applied at an ever increasing rate to research on problems of education. Among the cognitive styles identified to date, the field-dependence-independence dimension has been the most extensively studied and has had the widest application to educational problems (Witkin, Dyk, Faterson, Goodenough, and Karp, 1962/1974; Witkin, Lewis, Hertzman, Machover, Meissner, and Wapner, 1954/1972; Witkin, 1976). While research on educational applications is still

in its early stages, the evidence that research has already produced suggests that a cognitive-style approach may be applied with profit to a variety of educational issues. It accordingly seems timely to bring to the attention of educators the concept of cognitive styles in general and to work on field-dependence-independence in particular, which at the moment appears to have the clearest implications for educational issues.

Studies examining the field dependence-independence dimensions in children have found that field independence is related to both independent achievement efforts and task persistence (Crandall and Sinkeldan, 1964) and that field dependence is related to some forms of dependent behavior (Konstadt and Forman, 1965).

In a review of the literature relating field dependence-independence to learning and memory, Goodenough (1976) concluded that field independent individuals perform better than field dependent individuals under conditions of intrinsic motivation. It is suggested that this is because field independent individuals have more internalized standards which serve to regulate and motivate their behavior: field dependent individuals appear to lack the ability to initiate self-defined goals. Goodenough (1976) also concluded that field independent individuals used more of a participant approach to learning, whereas field dependents tend to use more of a spectator approach. These findings all seem to suggest that field-independent and field-dependent children would function optimally in different types of educational environments.

Field dependent students who are assigned to an open educational classroom may display negative affect because this is not the environment in which they can optimize learning. These feelings might be especially pronounced in academic areas such as mathematics and language arts, in

which learning has been found to be influenced by degree of structure (Bien, 1974; Stuart, 1967). In addition, field dependent children may feel especially inadequate when comparing themselves with field independent classmates who are likely to function well in an unstructured atmosphere. All of these factors might differentially affect children's self-concept and their attitude toward school or toward specific subjects learned in school.

The purpose of the proposed study is to investigate the relationship between field dependence-independence, self-esteem, and attitudes toward learning mathematics and language arts in open and traditional classrooms.

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects will be selected from Forsythe Intermediate School which has both alternative and traditional classrooms. An attempt will be made to include approximately sixty (60) children in the alternative program and a like number in the matched group who will be selected from the traditional program.

Apparatus

Children who participate in the study will be administered (1) The Group Embedded-Figures Test of field dependence-independence (Witkin, Oltman, Raskin & Karp, 1971). This test consists of a set of twelve cards with complex figures and a set of eight cards with simple forms. There is also one practice complex figure and sample form. A stylus is used by the subject to trace the outline of the simple form in each complex figure. A stopwatch is used for timing. (2) Three Likert-type attitude questionnaires; (2A) Attitudes Toward Learning Processes (Arlin & Hills, 1975a), (2B) Attitudes Toward Mathematics (Arlin & Hills, 1975b) and

(1) A possible explanation for the lack of differences that have been found between open and traditional classrooms on the variables of self-concept of students and their satisfaction with school.

(2) An indication that perhaps all children are not suited to an open educational environment. This might suggest selective placement of children in open or traditional classrooms or at the very least question the assumption that all children will perform equally well in both educational environments.

(3) An indication that perhaps the open classroom environment could be somewhat modified (increased in structure with some teacher-defined goals) until a student is psychologically comfortable with this atmosphere.

RESULTS

TABLE 15

FIELD DEPENDENCE-INDEPENDENCE DATA FOR MYA AND MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS (GROUP EMBEDDED FIGURES TEST)

	MYA	MATCHED CONTROL GROUP	df	F	Probability
N:	69	65	133	2.06	.15
M:	11.1	9.8			
SD:	5.0	5.4			

Personality, cognitive, and perceptual variables may influence both psychological and intellectual progress in school (Sue, 1977). The concept of field dependence-independence attempts to define and explain the well-researched differences in cognitive learning style among individuals. Field independent learners are more apt to feel comfortable in an "open" environment while field dependent students are more likely to learn more

comfortably in what we have come to call a "traditional" classroom. Table 15 reports data for MYA and matched-control group students for the area of field dependence-independence. These data were collected through the use of the Group Embedded Figures Test. The indication is that there is statistically no difference between the two groups of students. However, the magnitude of the F statistic is of sufficient size to permit the observation that a trend is present with MYA students appearing to be more field-independent than their counterparts. Both group means were very near the median for the norm group upon which the instrument was validated.

TABLE 16

PIERS-HARRIS SELF-CONCEPT DATA FOR
MYA AND MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS

	MYA	MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP	df	F	Probability
N:	65	64	128	1.04	.31
M:	59.1	57.2			
PERCENTILE RANKING:	66th	60th			
SD:	10.2	11.8			

Table 16 presents data collected in an attempt to search for any differences in self-concept between MYA and the control group. These data indicate that there is no difference in self-concept between these two groups of students.

TABLE 17

ARLIN-HILLS ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING PROCESSES
DATA FOR MYA AND MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS

	MYA	MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP	df	F	Probability
N:	58	64	121	49.168	*.000
M:	44.2	33.2			
SD:	9.1	8.3			

Table 17 reports data collected as part of the assessment of student attitudes toward learning. According to these data, MYA students have significantly more positive attitudes toward learning than do their counterparts in the matched student control group.

TABLE 18

ARLIN-HILLS ATTITUDES TOWARD MATH DATA FOR
MYA AND MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS

	MYA	MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP	df	F	Probability
N:	60	64	123	6.36	*.01
M:	43.44	39.45			
SD:	7.9	9.2			

According to the data in Table 18, MYA students have significantly more positive attitudes toward math than do the students in the matched-control group of students. A difference of this magnitude in the scores could occur by chance only once in one hundred attempts.

TABLE 19

ARLIN-HILLS ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE ARTS DATA
FOR MYA AND MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP STUDENTS

	MYA	MATCHED-CONTROL GROUP	df	F	Probability
N:	58	64	121	1.069	.30
M:	46.2	44.6			
SD:	9.5	7.8			

Data collected as the assessment of attitudes toward language arts indicate that there is no difference between MYA students and the matched group of control students. Both groups hold similar attitudes toward language arts.

CONCLUSIONS

A. QUESTIONNAIRES

The students' attitude toward the program as evidenced by the Student Opinion Questionnaire can be said to be enthusiastically supportive with few areas of exception. Students demonstrate a positive majority agreement concerning the student's role and performance in the program, although they feel a need for more student participation in program planning and more self-discipline on the part of fellow students. Also, they feel that there are too many students in the MYA who do not share its educational goals.

The MYA students indicate that the MYA counselor/teachers are more than creditable in their performance and attitudes toward the students and the program, although students ask for more teacher-parent communication and a higher level of community experiences.

The MYA students appear to perceive the parent group as becoming rather lax in their support of and attitude toward the MYA program. While the parents are perceived as being generally supportive of students, progress is asked for in the following areas: parents helping students select courses; parents participating in program activities, committees, and decisions; more daily classroom participation by parents.

The parental group's attitude toward the MYA program, as reflected in the Parent Opinion Questionnaire can be described as generally supportive and encouraging. With the exception of participation in program committees, program decisions, and the daily operation of the program, parents indicate that they are satisfied with their own efforts.

Parents indicate that they are generally satisfied and in support of the MYA teachers, although they are interested in a higher level of communication from the teachers, more participation in program planning

by the parents, and a greater degree of outreach into the community initiated by the teachers.

Moreover, the parent group generally agrees that the MYA student body is doing rather well in meeting its program responsibilities. The parents did indicate the need for improved effort on the part of MYA students in the following areas: students determining their own personal learning goals; students participating with teachers in planning classes; students choosing classes which meet their individual needs; student classroom behavior and discipline.

The MYA counselor/teachers' attitude toward the program, as demonstrated in the Teacher/Counselor Opinion Questionnaire, may be said to be enthusiastic and encouraging. The teachers are interested in improving communications with parents and in improving teacher-parent-student participation in developing the students' individual learning goals. But beyond these items, the counselor/teachers indicate that they are generally satisfied with their own performance.

Counselor/teachers indicate that they are mildly satisfied with parents' efforts to fulfill program responsibilities, although a significant increase in the following goal-related areas is indicated: parent participation in program decisions, activities, committees, and daily operations; parental help in the students' determination of their personal learning goals.

A majority of the counselor/teachers appear to be generally satisfied with the MYA students' efforts to achieve their program-related goal responsibilities. Teachers would have students increase their participation in the planning of classes and increase follow-through by students in classes to which they have committed themselves. The teachers also in-

dicated that MYA students should increase the level of aid they offer one another.

The MYA counselor/teachers point out that teachers should not be responsible for recruiting new students, and that there are too many students in the program who do not belong and consequently detract from the others and the MYA. They suggest a mechanism for student recruitment and selection. Also, the counselor/teachers expressed concern over job security as it is related to the fluctuating number of students in the program.

CONCLUSIONS

B. QUANTITATIVE MEASURES

Two basic hypotheses were investigated in this evaluative effort. The first was concerned with the academic achievements of students in the MYA. The second met the question of variation in terms of preferred style of learning. The generalized conclusions regarding these two hypotheses are presented in this section of the report.

Academic achievement was assessed through the use of California Achievement Test and Michigan Educational Assessment Program data. Seventh grade MYA students were compared to a matched group of students at Forsythe. No statistical difference was apparent on either the reading or math objectives of the MEAP. The data did indicate the presence of trends which began to display a positive effect in favor of the MYA group.

Eighth grade MYA students were compared to a matched group of Forsythe students and also to a random group of Ann Arbor students on CAT-70 reading comprehension and math computation scores. No differences were noted on the reading subtests. On math computation, however, both control groups scored significantly higher than the MYA. The reader should be

cautioned that these results are likely the culmination of several years of schooling.

Student attendance was investigated as a dependent variable. No difference was observed between MYA and a control group of students.

With some slight reservations, it is possible to conclude that there is no difference between MYA students and the control groups on the academic achievement variables.

The concept of preferred learning styles, while a well-researched topic, has only recently been discussed in relation to alternative education programs. Data were gathered regarding the MYA program on three dependent variables concerned with the general topic of learning style and cognitive considerations.

Self-concept data were collected with the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. MYA students were compared to a matched group of Forsythe students. No differences were noted.

Student attitudes were assessed toward three academic concepts. MYA students were noted as being significantly more positive in attitude toward learning processes and math than the matched group of students. There was no difference on the group mean attitude toward language arts.

The Group Embedded Figures Test was used to gain an understanding of the field dependence-independence levels of the two groups. No significant differences were observed. However, as would be expected for a group of students in an alternative program, the MYA group displayed a trend of being slightly more field independent.

Conclusions are difficult to reach from these measures of cognitive and affective education. Generally it may be said that MYA students have more positive attitudes toward learning, are more apt to be comfortable

in an "open-education" setting, but do not necessarily have better self-concepts.

MYA STUDENT/STAFF STATEMENTS

I had gone to MYA for as long as I could, and I sure am glad I did. MYA has a lot of advantages. The teacher-student ratio is better, and there is more time for working with students individually. MYA is run a little more loosely. For example, let's say in science you're finishing up a project. Often it is possible to stay an extra hour or whatever, unlike the regular public schools. Also, courses get changed every six weeks, which I consider an advantage.

By the end of the year, things were getting into the swing. Teachers were well organized, things were settled down. The teachers have really done an outstanding job this year and last year. Most all of the credit that goes to this program should be given to the four teachers. I know things get quite hectic at times, but they handle it really as well as possible.

I've learned things in MYA that I would never have learned, and I've done things in MYA that I would regularly never have a chance to do. This program is a great opportunity, and I am really glad I didn't miss it!!

By David Scott
MYA Student
8th Grade
6/10/78

MYA, for me, is a great place. I'm learning what I want to, but also what I need to.

The neat thing about it is that you have a larger variety of classes, and get a wider range of skills. For example, I'm in seventh grade, but I have the chance to take ninth grade algebra, chemistry, advanced outdoor science, and special writing classes.

There are side classes for fun, like camping, where we're getting

prepared to take an overnight camping trip. The debate class went to Mackinaw Island to listen to the Michigan Debate Team.

Since there are fewer kids in MYA, we get to know each other pretty well, and the teachers are great. There are problems with discipline, though, and that's all that bugs me. Some of the kids that come into MYA think it's a place to not learn; a dumping ground. So they goof off and don't use the freedom to learn easier properly. Instead, they hang out in the halls.

We do a lot of fun things. We're going on a camping trip with a few parents and the teachers at Waterloo, that all parents, students, and teachers planned.

I don't think the students in MYA are any different from kids in regular schools, but most of us enjoy learning more because it's a more relaxed environment, and that makes it enjoyable.

By Lisa Pierson
MYA Student
7th Grade
6/10/78

I was in sixth grade. After school one day I came home and my mom said there was going to be a special school, a really neat place where you can go your own speed and get lots of help. I was excited about going to this place because I felt I was going too slow and needed individual help. I told my friend about MYA and she decided to come too.

The first day we had a meeting. Everything seemed so strange -- there were lots of people I'd never seen before. The kids were asking the teachers questions instead of the teachers asking the kids. It really surprised me. It was really disorganized at first. That lasted

about two months. I got to know the people during that time, and made lots of new friends. We had town meetings, we discussed our schedules -- the teachers and kids figured out a way to schedule everybody into the classes they wanted. The town meetings helped us get the MYA more organized.

During the first year I learned lots of math with Mr. Dubois. I was in his classes almost all the time because we could get away with almost anything. We'd get out of work by cleaning tables. But I still got a lot of work done. I also took a lot of social studies with Miss McCray. I took classes with my friends all the time. I felt as though I got closer to my friends in the MYA because I was around them more and worked with them more. This year I like Mrs. Donia's genetics class. It's interesting and fun. There was no English teacher last year so my friends and I went down to Mr. Roth to get a tutor. This year some of the kids in the MYA got together to interview people to teach English. I learned a lot more English since we got a teacher. She's helping me write this essay. There were less than sixty kids last year. This year there are about eighty-five. I hang in a group. We have the same interests, not only that we get along well. But when I'm not with my friends, I get along with people not in my group better. I took Spanish in Forsythe in seventh grade and the kids were real mean to me and my friends. I think that a lot of the kids in Forsythe are jealous of the kids in the MYA. I think they'd like to be in here but their parents won't let them.

I think all schools should be like the MYA. Instead of the counselors doing the schedules, everyone should get together and decide on the classes they want. Most of the classes in Forsythe are just regular

math, science, social studies, etc., but in the MYA we have lots of mini-courses. I feel the mini-courses like Spring Flora and Fauna, a class on flowers, is interesting. I think if all the schools were like the MYA, kids would like to go to school lots more. I think kids wouldn't skip as much, they'd want to go to school more. I think the principal, Vaughn Filsinger, really likes the MYA. When the whole MYA is having troubles, Mr. Filsinger comes in and talks to us. He treats us like people instead of little kids. He is the nicest principal I've ever had.

I think the MYA has helped me to feel good about school and has encouraged me to do my work. In all my other years of school I felt like I didn't know as much as everyone else, but now I don't feel that way at all. I'm going to Community High next year. I'm looking forward to the art classes -- pottery and jewelry. I think I'll do well, I've got lots of friends there. They really like the classes and when I visited I liked the attitude of the teachers toward the students. It seems they help you out -- they don't make unreasonable demands. I think the MYA could improve if the kids helped out a little more, like doing things the teachers asked them to do, not that they don't but some kids act as though they came to the MYA just to mess around instead of participate. I think it's all up to the kids.

By Janet Proctor
MYA Student
8th Grade
6/10/78

The MYA program this year has been, for the most part, a successful program. Last fall our concern for numbers of students caused several students to enroll in the program, and, unfortunately, their reasons for choosing the program were that they wanted an alternative for education, not an alternative in education. In spite of this fact, students did have a variety of positive experiences in the program.

Although our enrollment is down for the school year 1978-79, I feel we have students enrolled who have a commitment to the program.

Vaughn E. Filsinger
Principal
Forsythe Intermediate School
6/30/78

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